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# Toxic leak forces evacuation

BY CHERYL BELLER

(Tribune Staff Reporter)

A two-block area of Clawson was evacuated Friday when a toxic chemical leaked from a nearby manufacturing company and sent a cloud of gas into the air.

No injuries were reported and police signaled an all clear around 11 p.m.

According to Sgt. Donald Smith, Clawson Police, a toxic gas cloud of trichloroethylene leaked from Davis Manufacturing Co., 930 North Main at Elmwood and was noticed by a passerby at around 8 p.m.

SMITH SAID, "Someone forgot to turn the heat down on a chemical. It got hot and vaporized and worked its way out of the building."

Smith said the gas is non-explosive but "very toxic if you inhale it."

The evacuation occurred near Elmwood and Main, near the Clawson-Troy border.

Smith said a north-to-south wind carried the gas cloud south into Clawson.

Troy and Clawson police evacuated two small apartment buildings near the site Friday. It wasn't known how many persons were evacuated from the area.

"CLAWSON AND Troy Fire Departments watered down the building," said Smith. "Everything was cleared as of 11 p.m."

Gary Descamps, office manager at

Davis Manufacturing, said, "We had a water cooling system that was inadvertently shut down. We use a type of cleaner to clean the oil off of parts we manufacture. The cleaner must be brought to a certain temperature before it works properly."

"The boiler that heats the chemical was working properly."

He said human error is blamed on the water cooling system shutdown.

"The water pump was shut off and did not allow vapors to condense back into fluid."

Descamps said everything is back to normal at his plant. "There isn't even anything to clean up. There wasn't a health hazard to anyone."

